

# Using Verapamil for Treatment of Cluster Headache

## What is verapamil?

Verapamil is used to prevent the cluster attacks from occurring. Although it is not licensed for this use it is used widely by headache specialists. As Verapamil can cause slowing of the heart, the dose has to be increased gradually as described below, and an ECG needs to be performed before each increase. Increase the dose only if advised by your doctor. If you start to get any side effects please let your doctor know as soon as possible. If you continue to take Verapamil you should have an ECG every six months.

## Side effects and drug interaction

You should read this leaflet in conjunction with the product characteristic leaflet that can be found inside the box. The main problem is slowing of the heart rate. Other common side effects include swollen ankles and constipation. There are a number of drugs that interact with Verapamil and which should be avoided, the most important being beta blockers and digoxin.

## Pregnancy and breast-feeding

You should not take verapamil if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding.



## How to take Verapamil

	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Midday</b>	<b>Evening</b>
For 2 weeks take:	80mg	80mg	80mg
	<i>Arrange to have an ECG performed - if the ECG is normal then:</i>		
For 2 weeks take:	80mg	80mg	160mg
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	<i>Arrange to have an ECG performed - if the ECG is normal then:</i>		
For 2 weeks take:	320mg	320mg	320mg
	<i>Arrange to have an ECG performed and if normal repeat every 6 months</i>		

This leaflet is intended to provide a brief overview of aspects of this treatment protocol. It is not intended as a substitute for the comprehensive 'product information' leaflet found inside all boxes of medication. The 'product information' leaflet should always be read before taking medication.

**Your prescribing doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of the medication as it relates to you and answer any further questions you may have.**

Bath Headache Clinic 2017

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